The Government have consistently conveyed to the international community that action by Pakistan on the list of 20 will demonstrate its sincerity to permanently stop cross border terrorism against India. There is support and understanding for India's position.

U.S. Official's visit to India

239. SHRIPRANAB MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that during the last six weeks a number of U.S.A. officials have visited India and Pakistan and have advised both the countries to de-escalate tension on the border;

(b) the outcome of the dialogue between U. S. A. officials and Government;

(c) whether it has reduced the number of incidents of infiltration and exfiltration in Jammu & Kashmir; and

(d) whether it has also helped de-escalation of tension on Indo-Pak Border ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) During the last six weeks, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and the U.S. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld visited India on June 6-7 and June 11-12 respectively. These visits took place in the context of persisting cross-border terrorism againt India, culminating in the terrorist attack in Kaluchak on May 14.

(b) They conveyed President Musharraf's pledge to the United States on an immediate, visible and permanent end to cross-border infiltration and his assurance to dismantle terrorist camps and expressed hope for de-escalatory measures from india. Government responded in a calibrated manner to President Musharraf's pledge and to its own assessment of the situation on the ground.

(c) Infiltration and terrorist incidents continue to take place in Jammu & Kashmir as demonstrated by the heinous attack in Jammu on July 13.

(d) A permanent cessation of cross-border terrorism against India is necessary to diffuse the current tension between India and Pakistan.

Long lasting relationship with Afghanistan

240. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government of Afghanistan has sought long lasting relationship with India in the sectors of education, health and aviation;

(b) if so. the details thereof; and

(c) Governments response in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) Government is committed to strengthening and diversifying its bilateral ties with the government of Afghanistan. During the visit of H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai. Chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration, and now President of the Transitional Government, several areas of cooperation, including Health, Education. Information Technology, Public Transport, Industry, Energy and Training were identified.

India is committed and has provided extensive humanitarian, project and financial assistance to Afghanistan including in the field of health with the supply of medical stores and medical services, and setting up of artificial limbs center in Kabul. Government is working closely with the Afghan government to finalize modalities for the construction of new schools and rehabilitation of existing schools.

Government is also in the process of finalizing details for handing over of three aircraft from Air India to Ariana Afghan Airlines.